

Message Text

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12

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-05 /084 W

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R 221900Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8647

INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GUATEMALA 5845

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PBOR, GT, UK, BH, MX

SUBJ: BELIZE: PRESS REPORTS

REF: MEXICO 9158

1. AFTERNOON NEWSPAPER LA HORA OF OCT 21 CARRIED ALARMIST FRONT-PAGE STORY HEADLINED "WARLIKE MOBILIZATION BY THE ENGLISH IN BELIZE". STORY QUOTED INFORMATION FROM BELIZE SAYING THAT AIRLIFTED TROOPS, CANBERRA AIRPLANES, AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER, TWO BATTLESHIPS, WARPLANES, AND "PUMA" HELICOPTERS HAD ARRIVED IN BELIZE. BELIZE AIRPORT REPORTED "HEAVILY FORTIFIED" AND CURFEW SAID TO HAVE BEEN IMPOSED THERE.

2. LA HORA STORY ADDED THAT RELIABLE SOURCES IN GUATEMALA SAID THAT ARMY WAS "REINFORCING ITS TROOPS IN TOWNS BORDERING ON THE TERRITORY OF BELIZE, AS A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE."

3. LA HORA STORY IGNORED STATEMENTS MADE BY FONMIN MOLINA AT OCT 21 PRESS CONF. WHICH WERE PICKED

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UP IN ALL OTHER PAPERS. EL GRAFICO OF OCT 22

QUOTED MOLINA AS SAYING THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO RE-INFORCEMENT OF BRITISH TROOPS IN BELIZE. LA NACION OF OCT 22 HAD MOLINA SAYING THAT THE BRITISH TROOPS ARE THE SAME AS BEFORE, AND THAT THERE HAS BEEN "NO INDICATION THAT THEY HAVE BEEN AUGMENTED OR WILL BE AT A NEAR DATE." OCT 22 STORY IN PRENSA LIBRE CARRIED SIMILAR STATEMENT BY MOLINA, BUT IN ADDITION QUOTED AN OFFICIAL ARMY SPOKESMAN AS DENYING THAT GOG MILITARY CONTINGENTS HAD BEEN CONCENTRATED NEAR BELIZE.

4. STORIES OF MEXICAN FONSECA'S STATEMENTS RE-MUDDYING THE WATERS IN REGARD TO MEXICO'S POLICY TOWARD BELIZE (REFTEL) HAVE BEEN PICKED UP IN GUATEMALA. GUATEMALAN OFFICIALS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY SURPRISE. AT HIS OCT 21 PRESS CONF. MOLINA DENIED HAVING ANY "OFFICIAL" INFO OF THE RABASA STATEMENT, BUT COMMENTED THAT IF RABASA'S REPORTED STATEMENTS WERE TRUE, THEY WOULD BE CONTRADICTORY TO THOSE RECENTLY MADE BY MEXICAN PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA.

5. COMMENT: THE FLAP OVER THE RABASA STATEMENT MAY HELP DEFLECT PRESS COVERAGE AWAY FROM REPORTS OF A BRITISH BUILDUP IN BELIZE. IT IS WORTHWHILE NOTING THAT ALTHOUGH FONMIN MOLINA KNOWS OF THE ARRIVAL OF THE ADDITIONAL BRITISH HELICOPTERS AND SUPPORT TROOPS, HE HAS PREFERRED TO DENY THEIR ARRIVAL RATHER THAN RISK OR ENCOURAGE A MAJOR PRESS UPROAR. END COMMENT.

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